United Nations

Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council, in Presidential statement last night, condemns Bosnian Serb offensive on Mount Igman aimed at Sarajevo and demands end to attacks on city; calls on parties to negotiate settlement in Geneva under Co-Chairmen of Yugoslavia Conference.

+ Co-Chairmen of Yugoslavia Conference hopeful, but not optimistic, that Bosnia and Herzegovina peace talks will begin on Sunday; insist that parties exercise restraint and create suitable conditions for talks.

+ Secretary-General, in report to Security Council, recommends that UNIFIL's mandate be extended by six months to 31 January 1994; says operations have been hindered by increased hostilities, citing continuing Israeli occupation of parts of southern Lebanon.

+ Economic and Social Council endorses proposals for action on consequences of 1986 Chernobyl disaster; Economic Committee approves draft resolutions on proposed fixed transport link between Europe and Africa and on industrialization in Africa.

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The Security Council last night condemned the Bosnian Serb offensive on Mount Igman aimed at further isolating Sarajevo, and demanded an immediate end to all attacks on the city. In a statement read out by its President, Sir David Hannay (United Kingdom), the Council reaffirmed the unacceptability of ethnic cleansing, forceful acquisition of territory or any dissolution of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Council demanded an immediate end to all violations of international humanitarian law and to the disruption of public utilities by the Bosnian Serbs. The Council emphasized that it would keep open all options, "none of which is prejudged or excluded from consideration".

In support of the efforts of the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, the Council renewed its demand for an end

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to hostilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It called on the parties to negotiate in earnest in Geneva, under the auspices of the Co-Chairmen, with a view to a just settlement on the basis of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the Republic. The Council also reaffirmed its resolution 824 (1993), which declared Sarajevo a safe area, and resolution 836 (1993), which expanded the mandate of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) to protect such areas.

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The Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord Owen, are hopeful, but "not quite optimistic", that talks to settle the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina will begin on Sunday, according to a United Nations spokesman. He said the Co-Chairmen were were still working on the basis that the parties would arrive for the talks in Geneva at noon that day.

The Co-Chairmen had rescheduled the talks for Sunday because of the situation on the ground in Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to a statement issued yesterday. The Co-Chairmen had written to the parties insisting that they honour their commitments to exercise restraint and to create suitable conditions for talks.

The Co-Chairmen had also welcomed reports that road-blocks which had prevented a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) convoy from reaching Gorazde had been lifted, as well as reports that obstacles on routes in western Bosnia and Herzegovina had been removed.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the Security Council extend the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for another six months until 31 January 1994. He said in a report dated 20 July that UNIFIL's contribution to stability in southern Lebanon and its protection of the population there were important, although the Force had not made visible progress in implementing its mandate in the last six months.

UNIFIL had been prevented from implementing its mandate by increased hostilities in its area of operations, according to the Secretary-General. The Force had been severely hampered by firing by the armed elements there and by the Israel Defence Forces and the so-called "South Lebanon Army". The hostilities highlighted Israel's continuing occupation of parts of southern Lebanon, despite the Security Council's repeated calls for its withdrawal.

The Secretary-General drew attention to the serious shortfall in funding for UNIFIL, and appealed to all Member States to pay assessments promptly and in full and to clear remaining arrears. Unpaid assessments now totaled some $229 million, he noted.

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The Economic and Social Council has endorsed proposals for action to deal with the consequences of the 1986 Chernobyl accident, as recommended by Jan Eliasson, the Coordinator of International Cooperation dealing with the disaster. Mr. Eliasson told the Council in Geneva yesterday that a new approach based on solid facts and sober assessments had been adopted. It called for identifying the most urgent needs; taking stock of ongoing programmes; determining the time-frames for action; and identifying funding sources.

The Coordinator said that the three States concerned -- Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine -- had agreed that health, socio-pyschological and economic rehabilitation, and agriculture were priority areas for action. He urged the international community to strengthen efforts to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, not only out of solidarity but also out of enlightened self-interest.

Meanwhile, the Council's Economic Committee approved two draft resolutions on the proposed permanent transport link between Africa and Europe through the Strait of Gibraltar and on industrialization in Africa. By the first draft, the Council would invite scientific and technical institutions to take part in a special meeting on the proposed link, and would call on States concerned to cooperate with Morocco and Spain in carrying out studies for the project. The second draft called for a dialogue between industrialized and developing countries in the context of the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa.

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